

Book Reviews

MICHAEL J. CULLEN, *The statistical movement in early Victorian Britain. The foundations of empirical social research*, Hassocks, Sussex, Harvester Press, 1975, 8vo, pp. xii, 205, £7.50.

The author's purpose is to examine the statistical movement, especially in the 1830s and 1840s until its demise in 1852, in order to find out how it organized itself, to assess its achievements and to discover a distinctive philosophy, if it had one. Most, but not all, of the social statisticians of the time are included here and their activities are introduced by a survey of British social statistics from 1660 to 1830. The remainder of the book is divided into two parts: government departments and social statistics, 1832–1852; the statistical societies of London, Manchester, and of other provincial towns such as Glasgow, Bristol, Belfast and Leeds. In the first part there are sections on William Farr and the General Register Office, the health of the armed forces (pp. 45–52) and on Edwin Chadwick and sanitary statistics (pp. 53–64).

The author believes that the collectors of statistics were applying their special skill primarily to improve the state of society by reform, having first identified the main problems. Often, however, their surveys led to conclusions already formed and to preconceived theories. It seems that their statistics were only a part of a general campaign aimed at reforms. Unfortunately they demonstrated considerable naïvety and ignorance of the society that they wished to change, and dissipated their energies on too wide a programme, or neglected obvious research areas. Whether these men, can, in fact, be grouped together as a movement, however, is not entirely proven here.

Nevertheless Dr. Cullen provides detailed information on a topic which until now has been inadequately investigated, and he presents it with extensive documentation and a bibliography of primary sources. His excellent book will be of central interest to many historians of medicine, mainly to those dealing with public health and medicine in the first half of the nineteenth century.

ADRIAN J. DESMOND, *The hot-blooded dinosaurs. A revolution in palaeontology*, London, Blond & Briggs, 1975, 4to, pp. 238, illus., £5.95.

The author supports the current theory that whilst most dinosaurs were poikilothermic and small-brained reptiles, other varieties were warm-blooded, energetic and had large brains. He cites the supporting evidence usually put forward for this contention, pointing out that the "ostrich" dinosaur, the battling Tyrannosaurus and Triceratops, and the immense Brontosaurus could not have operated if they had been cold-blooded. The data are presented in a readable yet scholarly fashion, with numerous drawings, notes and references, and with a useful glossary of technical words.

As a competent survey of recent ideas on the subject of dinosaurs in particular and palaeontology in general, this book can be recommended. It also presents the Victorian interpretations of dinosaurs, and thus contributes to the history of science. Mr. Desmond should, however, have made it clearer that these new concepts are by no means universally accepted; in fact some palaeontologists judge them to be highly suspect speculations and bring powerful arguments to refute them. We are, therefore, given only one side of the story, and for the moment must regard this book as presenting an unproven hypothesis.